

# Our Exceeding Great Reward

## I. The First Fruits

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The city of Jericho divided Canaan from the wilderness. The wilderness was the land from which the children of Israel had just come. Jericho was not only a gateway into the promised land; it was also a gateway into the wilderness. The city of Jericho represents the tithes.

### **Joshua 6:19:**

*But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.*

In Joshua chapter six, the Lord said, "This city belongs to Me. Joshua, I want you to take all of the treasures and put them in the treasure house because they belong to Me." God used this as a demonstration to the fact that the tithe or first fruits belong to the Lord.

Some may ask, "Well, if the first fruits (tithe) belong to the Lord, why doesn't He just keep it to Himself? Why does He give it to us and ask us to give it back? Why doesn't He just keep the ten percent and give us the ninety percent?"

Proverbs 3:9-10 says, "*Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*" Giving the first fruits of all our increase brings honor to the Lord. If we were never given a choice to either give to the Lord or keep the first fruits for ourselves, He would receive no honor. God loves when we give back to Him with a willing heart. When we freely give back to Him what He has given to us, it is an expression of honor toward Him. The ten percent is not the issue. The attitude behind our giving is what God is looking for.

## II. The Wall and Obedience

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The walls of Jericho were so thick six chariots could race each other side-by-side. People even built homes along the wall. Behind the wall were the giants of the land—the well prepared men of war.

The walls of Jericho represent fear. Each stone in the wall represents fear. And each giant behind the wall represents an excuse against tithing. There was no other way to enter the land of abundance than through the city of Jericho. The city appeared daunting, the walls impenetrable. Combined with the giants the spies reported to the children of Israel, many were afraid to enter into the land. In fact, two tribes decided not to go in. They chose to camp on the opposite side of the Jordan and remain in the wilderness.

The wilderness was not a land of lack. God never leads His children into a land of lack. The land of lack was in Egypt—a land under Satan’s control. Egypt is a type of the unbeliever. But the moment a person is born again, God leads them into the land of *just enough*.

When Jesus was teaching his disciples to pray He prayed, “Father, Give us this day our daily bread.” The Greek says, “Give us today today’s bread. Give us enough bread for today.” That is exactly what the wilderness represents. Enough manna fell for one day. Enough quail fell for one day. Each morning the children of Israel arose and trusted God to meet their needs for that day. God wants to lead us past the land of just enough—hand to mouth, paycheck to paycheck, month to month. God wants to lead us into a land of abundance! However, the land of abundance is separated by a wall of obedience.

If you will be obedient and willing *then* you will eat the good of the land (Isaiah 1:19). The city of Jericho was a test. God placed it there as a test. Malachi 3:10 tells us God wants us to “prove” or test Him through our giving. The test of man is to give. The test for God is to pour out a blessing so great we cannot contain it! God wants us to accept the test, face our fears, face the giants—our excuses and march around all of our fears and excuses with the Word of God!

### III. Dealing with the Flesh

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#### **Joshua 5:2:**

*At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.*

The men were required to be circumcised before they could enter into the promised land. This was dealing with the flesh. In essence, it was a test of the heart motive of those entering the land of abundance. Flesh could stand in the way of going into the land.

Deuteronomy 8:18 says, *“But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.”* In other words, God was saying, “Don’t forget it is the Lord Who blesses you. He is the One Who gives to you.”

Even though many of the children of Israel were in fear about entering the land of abundance, they did not realize the giants behind the walls were afraid of them! Their knees were shaking because they knew the land belonged to the children of Israel.

Before entering the land of abundance, all fear and excuses must be dealt with. You must be willing to give the first fruits of all your increase by faith and not in fear.

## IV. Prime the Pump

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Years ago there was a song about a man going through the desert who was very thirsty. He came across a water pump. When he saw it, he ran to the pump and found a small container of water with a note attached to it. The note said “Do not drink this water. Use this water to prime the pump. If you will prime the pump, you will have more water than you can use. The pump will bring it from below the ground. Because this pump goes for long periods of time without being used, it dries out and won’t work. It needs just enough water to cause it to work again. Do not drink the water!”

The man looked at the note and looked at the water and he had a decision to make. He could either drink the water to immediately quench his thirst or he could believe the note. He wondered, “What if I pour the water on the pump and nothing happens? Where will I find more water?” The man ignored his fears and poured the water on the pump and began to pump. For the longest time, nothing happened and his fears began speaking again, “See, you should have drank the water when you had a chance. You wasted it. Now you’ll probably die of thirst.” Suddenly, there was a rumbling from under the ground and water began to flow in abundance. He drank and drank, poured the water over himself, and filled his canteens. The very end of the note said, “Be sure to refill this container, so the next person who comes along can prime the pump.”

For many years, believers have been “drinking” their tithes. They have used their tithes to fulfill an immediate need, but they could have used it to “prime the pump” for more blessings than they could ever contain! But for years they have been “drinking” the tithe, fearful the Scriptures about abundance will fail—fearful God won’t come through for them. Mention abundance and everyone says, “Yes, let’s enter into that land of abundance.” Mention prosperity and everyone says, “Yes, bring the prosperity.” But mention the tithe and fears and excuses begin to rise up. The “wall” to the city of abundance demands something of us, but on the other side of the wall, the demand is placed on the Lord. It is up to us to “prime the pump”—honor the Lord with the first fruits of *all* of our increase, then our barns will be filled with plenty and our presses will burst forth with new wine!

## V. Honor the Lord

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### **Genesis 14:18-20:**

*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*

*And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:*

*And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

This passage contains the first mention of the tithe in the Word of God. Notice, the communion elements—the bread and the wine—accompanied the first mention of the tithe. The bread and wine represent keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord. Abraham had just received great spoils of war and by partaking of communion, he was focusing his attention back on the Lord—the Giver of blessings, and not on the blessings themselves. Through the communion elements, Abraham was honoring the Lord first.

Melchizedek is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in that he was both king and priest. Melchizedek was the only king-priest prior to Jesus Christ. Although David was a king who acted as a priest, he was only of the kingly tribe. But Melchizedek was both king and priest. Understand he is only a type of Jesus Christ. Tithes go to people. When Melchizedek was given the tithe, he put it in the tabernacle. By giving the first fruits to Melchizedek, Melchizedek in turn was able to offer it to the Lord. Abraham immediately took ten percent of the spoils and offered them to the Lord. Long before the king of Sodom had arrived, the first fruits had been given to the Lord.

## **VI. After the Wall Falls**

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After Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek he went home.

### **Genesis 15:1:**

*After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

When Abraham returned home, he became afraid. Usually the first time someone steps out to tithe, immediately after giving fear tries to rise up and they think, “What have I just done?” You have felt the Holy Spirit moving, you give and by the time you’re home you think, “I wonder if I can get that money back. I’ve got bills to pay. It was foolish of me to give. Maybe I should just contact the ministry and tell them I made a mistake. I didn’t really mean to give.” Fear begins to rise up. Often fear will rise up *before* the wall falls, but it will also rise up *after* the walls have fallen.

The walls of Jericho had fallen, Abraham had given a tithe of the spoils to the Lord, and he began to become concerned. But Abraham had not given his first fruits to just anyone. He had given it to a representative of God. And through that representative, he had actually given it to the Lord Himself. And God’s response was, “Abraham, because you gave to Me—because you put Me first, I will be your shield. I will be your protection.”

## VII. Your Exceeding Great Reward

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God told Abraham "I am your exceeding great reward." The Hebrew word for "exceeding" is the word "mehod." This word means "speedy, fast, or quick."

The Hebrew word for "great" is "rabah." It means "increasing."

Finally, the Hebrew word for "reward" does not mean "reward." It actually means, "salary, wages, money supply."

God was actually telling Abraham, "I will be your shield and your speedy increasing money supply." Another word is "finances." God was simply saying to Abraham, "Why are you so concerned about money and security? I will be your protection and I will be your rapidly increasing supply of finances from this time forward. Abram, quit looking to yourself. Quit looking at your age, your ability, your effort. Don't put your trust in them, put your trust in Me!"

### **Genesis 17:1:**

*And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the Almighty God." The Hebrew word is El Shaddai, the all-sufficient One. God is as much our supplier when we are ninety-nine as when we are fifty-nine, twenty-nine, or nineteen! God was in essence saying, "Abraham, just follow My Word. I will see that the blessings keep coming to you."

## VIII. New Testament Analogy for the Tithe

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### **Hebrews 7:1-3:**

*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*

*To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

*Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

The Greek for verse three literally says, "Having no recorded father, no recorded mother, having no recorded beginning of days." This does not mean Melchizedek did not have an earthly father or mother. The Bible simply does not record where he was born or where he was from. Why is this important? Because under the law, lineage was very important. A

person had to prove which tribe they were born into. But Melchizedek predates the law by some 490 years and he also predates the priesthood under Moses. Melchizedek came on the scene without any recorded beginning or ending of days and he is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse says he as "*made like unto*" the Son of God but he was not the Son of God.

**Hebrews 7:4:**

*Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

**Hebrews 7:8:**

*And here men that die receive tithes; but there he (Jesus) receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

From the time tithes were first instituted in the Word of God they were given to men who represent the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham gave to Melchizedek. We give to the pastor of our local church. Just as Melchizedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ, so does the pastor who has oversight of the local church.

Verse eight says, "*...here men that die receive tithes.*" Melchizedek died. Unless the rapture of the church occurs, the pastor of your local church will one day die. But the attitude behind your giving will live on.

## **IX. Attitude Behind Giving**

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If on earth men who receive tithes die, tithes must refer to something more than money. Money has no value in heaven. Earth is the only place where money has value. Men receive tithes, but the Lord receives the attitude behind the tithes. Every time we give to the Lord with a willing heart, the Lord receives honor. God does not want us to give grudgingly or of necessity. He wants us to be cheerful givers. Men receive the money. God receives the attitude of love for Him behind the giving of the money. When we give with a wrong attitude, men still receive the money, but God receives nothing. In giving finances, we give faith and love along with our giving. When we give with a right attitude behind our giving, we honor the Lord. When we give by faith and in love, God receives the faith and the love. He uses our attitude to bless us back on earth. The faith we use in giving begins to be multiplied back to us and we can leave the land of just enough and enter the land of more than enough!

## **X. Scriptures About Giving**

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**2 Timothy 1:7:**

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

**Proverbs 3:9-10:**

*Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:  
So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*

**2 Corinthians 9:8:**

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:*

**Isaiah 1:19:**

*If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:*

**Luke 6:38:**

*Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

**2 Corinthians 9:6:**

*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.*

**Genesis 15:1:**

*After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*